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Ernest and I always intended to write down the events of our escape from Germany, but somehow we never got around to it. Now with Ernest gone, I will try to do it on my own as well as I remember.

We got married in 1936 and lived in Nuernberg under already difficult circumstances. Ernest's business travels took him abroad a great deal and to make sure that he would always return to Germany, the Nazis demanded that I relinquish my passport and be forced to remain in Germany. At the end of October 1938, Ernest was supposed to go to Paris and London on business but had to postpone his trip and, subsequently, left on November 4, 1938. Due to this, he escaped Crystal night - November 9th, 1938, and he never returned to Germany. Instead he went from London to Amsterdam on November 9th. He immediately contacted our lawyer who had worked for many months to obtain a permit to transfer the business and thirteen people, family members and business partners to Amsterdam. Ernest found out on that day that the Dutch authorities had granted that permit. The same day, Ernest had heard rumors about Crystal night and immediately contacted his father who was in Switzerland and then called me in Nuernberg. I had just returned from a visit with my parents in Munich and found the inside of our house in Nuernberg in shambles. No sooner was I home, there was a call for Ernest from the British Consul in Munich. He was glad to hear that Ernest was out of the country and asked me to come to Munich to see him, which I did the following day. The Consul informed me that, after many months, the Home Office in London had issued a Permit of Residence for Ernest and myself. Here I was with two permits and could have left Germany if I would have had a passport.

In the meantime, Ernest took up residence in Amsterdam, so did his father and one of his partners, Max Lauinger. Now the problem was how to get me and

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everybody else out of Germany. Ernest and Max decided that I, being the youngest, should be the first one, and after that I was called "sample package." On December 12, 1938, I was contacted in Nuernberg by a gentleman from Holland who came with explicit instructions for me to depart the following day. I was not supposed to tell anybody and had to leave everything behind. My parents knew, of course, that I would leave sooner or later and I told our maid that I would visit my girlfriend in Bamberg for a few days. On December 13th, in the afternoon, I took the train to Cologne and stayed overnight with friends who were informed about my attempt to escape. The following afternoon I took a train to Goch, a small town near the Dutch border. My instructions were to travel without money, luggage and any other possessions. I had the address of a small inn in Goch where somebody was supposed to meet me and get me across the border. It was very cold and already dark and I was terribly frightened because nobody came to the inn to meet me. I just had enough money to buy a cup of coffee, having disposed of the last cash I had before I entered the inn. It got very late and I had no choice but to ask for a room for the night. Fortunately, the innkeeper was cooperative and later on it occurred to us that he must have been an accomplice of the group who smuggled people across the border. I called my friends in Cologne collect and asked them to contact Ernest to inform him that apparently his plan did not work and to send me money as quickly as possible. I asked them to give Ernest the phone number of the inn and, after what seemed an eternity to me but was only a short while, Ernest called to say that there was some delay and to stay put. I thought this was the end of me, all alone and nobody to talk to.

After an hour or so, two young people, a boy and a girl, came in, looked around, and sat down at my table. They mentioned the parole word which I do not remember anymore and they gave me to understand that I was to follow them out. I picked up my meager belongings and left the inn in a hurry. I was very scared because the young people looked very cunning and not trustworthy at all. They were waiting for me at a corner with two bicycles. They were very hard to understand because a sort of Pennsylvania Dutch, a mixture of German and Dutch is spoken in that area. The girl, more or less by sign language motioned to me to

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sit on the bicycle behind her on some sort of a bar. The boy went ahead and we followed him on a very dark country road as fast as possible. After about half an hour, we stopped in front of a house and I quickly went in and saw a lot of adults and children in a huge room. A woman approached me and when I asked if I was in Holland, she said no. At the same time, a little Jewish man got up and told me not to be too optimistic because their attempt to get him across the border the night before did not succeed. He asked me in half Yiddish, half German, where I came from, if I was married and what business my husband was in. Under the circumstances, I found this rather humorous. The woman turned out to be the mother of all the children -- about 10. She spoke a German which I was able to understand and explained that there would be a delay in getting me to Holland. I had to spend the night in the same bed with the girl on whose bicycle I rode.

The next morning, I noticed that I was in some kind of a farmhouse and looking out behind a curtain I saw a little country road which was patrolled by German and Dutch border police. I was horrified. I was isolated for three days and had no way of knowing what was going on. People were coming and going all the time but I could not understand what they were saying.

On the third day, the woman asked me if I could ride a bicycle and I told her yes. They told me to go into a stable in back of the house and the entire family was waiting for me there. One of the boys was holding a bicycle and they adjusted the saddle for me and made me ride around and around to make sure that I would not fall off. This was rather funny. I did alright and they told me that the young girl and I were to ride to the next village which was in Holland. They allowed me to wear my own coat, but I had to leave everything else behind, and they promised to send it to me. Although I realized later that this was very unimportant, I was very sad at the time to have to part with an inexpensive watch Ernest had given me, a beautiful leather purse, a knirps and some other small items, none of which I ever saw again. We took off on the narrow country road I had seen before. It was a very cold and cloudy winter day and it was very difficult to ride the bike because of the many ruts in the road. The girl went

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ahead and after about ten minutes, two men on bicycles approached me. They were Dutch border policemen who passed me without paying any attention. I was so scared that up to this day I do not understand why I did not fall off the bike. After about another forty minutes we reached a small town where we stopped at the market place which turned out to be a bus stop.

As soon as I got off the bike I was surrounded by a group of women and children. The girl who was up to then my leader left. I got on a bus with the others and a woman told me to hold a little girl on my lap. The bus was very crowded and nobody paid any attention to us. We got off the bus in the business section of another town, where I was guided into a butcher store and immediately taken to a room behind the store. My bus companions left and the butcher, a very nice and kind man, started talking to me in perfect German. It was the first time in days that I was able to communicate with somebody. He informed me that I was in Arnheim, Holland -- what a relief! He then phoned the leader of the smuggler organization in Amsterdam to tell them about my arrival. A short while later Ernest called and talked first to the butcher and then to me. (I want to mention here that I was still in danger without a passport and could have easily been caught by the Dutch police and sent back to Germany. In consideration of this the lawyer in Amsterdam told Ernest that it would be safest for Ernest to pick me up because he had a valid passport and a Dutch residence permit.)

I felt somewhat relaxed for the first time in days, knowing that Ernest would come for me. He arrived in the late afternoon and there is just no way to describe our reunion. He told me that he and Max did not know where I was during the time I was kept in the farmhouse and what an ordeal it was for them. Out of desperation, they had a few bottles of Dutch Schnapps, which sounded quite funny in retrospect, but I realized that they went through a terrible time. Before Ernest and I left, the butcher and his wife brought a bottle of the traditional Dutch drink, "Genevre" and we celebrated my escape. We then took a train to Amsterdam where we were met by my father-in-law and Max Lauinger. Max asked me what I wanted most, and I told him a bath. This broke the tension and I had my first good laugh in many days.

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We took a taxi to the boarding house where Ernest and Max lived, and I felt like being on a honeymoon. It was the second happiest day of my life after our wedding. After a few days I received my residence permit. We thought Amsterdam would be our future home and were extremely happy there. We lived modestly, first in a boarding house and then in a small furnished apartment in a very nice neighborhood. Fortunately most of my personal belongings were taken out from Germany by some Gentile friends and brought to Amsterdam. Finally, late in December 1938, the other business partners and their families came to Amsterdam after they overcame many obstacles similar to mine. On New Years Eve we had a big celebration with lobster and beer and everybody was extremely happy. We were very anxious to learn Dutch and, through friends, met an especially nice young Dutch woman, Gentile, who gave us lessons and became a very good friend. We got adjusted to our new life and were content. The men worked hard to continue the business and were successful.

We tried to get my parents out of Germany but the Dutch authorities refused to grant them a permit. Ernest eventually succeeded to get a permit for them in England, but they had to leave before that due to circumstances in Germany. My mother's brother, Emil Kahn and his family, lived in Brussels at that time. We called him right away and asked him for help. He was able to get a temporary residence permit for my parents in Belgium. Again, the Dutch smuggler organization was of great help and brought them via Holland to Belgium in June 1939. They spent one night in Holland on their way. We did not dare to go to see them together, so Ernest went alone. At that time, it was much easier to stay in Belgium than in any other country. We all met in Brussels and then spent two marvelous weeks with my parents in the Belgian countryside in July 1939.

From Belgium, Ernest and I went to London to take up our residence. Since the permit for my parents was given in the meantime, Ernest insisted that they come to London because it was obvious that war was inevitable. We only had a few days together and, at the end of August, Ernest and I went back to Amsterdam.

The war broke out in September 1939, and we could have returned to England but Ernest refused because he felt we should all stay together. Life in Holland

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appeared normal but we were constantly aware of the imminent danger of the Nazis and could do nothing about it. We tried to go back to London in November but the British did not let anybody in anymore. Then came May 10, 1940, when we woke up at 4:00 a.m. and heard the bombs falling at the airport in Amsterdam. The following four days were a nightmare. There were constant air raids and we were not permitted to go out. The Dutch war lasted only four days. The Queen left, the Nazis marched in and all of us went to a nearby harbor hoping to escape to England by boat without success. We were extremely afraid because we thought the Nazis had lists of people who left Germany illegally. We lived with Max and Dora, who had gotten married in the meantime, for approximately a week because we considered it safer. Luckily the Nazis were so busy occupying Holland that at first they paid little attention to the Jews. Our business stopped because it was 100% export, and the good life came to an end.

After we returned to our own flat I kept house, Ernest and Max took a course in a trade school to be occupied. Everything was uncertain and we lived in constant fear. The razzias started, mostly at night but, fortunately, we had Dutch Gentile friends who were with the Underground, or had connections, and they gave us warnings so that we could hide. We had to leave our flat frequently at night on bicycles. A man whom Ernest met at the trade school offered us shelter in one of the beautiful old houses on a canal, very similar to the place where Anne Frank was hidden. We felt pretty safe there and they were always willing to take us in and let us stay until it was safe to leave. Eventually matters got worse for the Jews, and we were afraid to remain in the neighborhood where we lived because many Dutch and German Jews were there and it made us very conspicuous, so we had to consider moving.

In order to explain the events that followed, I have to mention that Ernest's father got married in Amsterdam in 1939 to a very old friend from Berlin. She had four grown children, three of whom lived in Amsterdam. We were extremely close to her son, Lutz Levinsohn, who was like a brother to us. His fiancee, Ali, a Gentile girl from Amsterdam, was an especially nice and helpful person. We talked the problem of moving over with them and decided that we would have to have two

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addresses; one to register with the police which was demanded in Holland, and one to live underground. Friends of Ali's had a brownstone house in an older, middle class neighborhood and they offered to rent us a room and let us use their address for registration with the police. We actually never used the room but these people saw to it that it looked lived in. There always were wet wash cloths, used towels, an ashtray with cigarette butts and some of our belongings.

It was more difficult to find a hiding place. However, fortunately most Dutch people hated the Germans and were anxious to help the Jews. We were able to contact an artist, again with the help of Ali and some of her friends who worked for the Underground. He owned a very old house in the old section of Amsterdam. There was a huge atelier on the fourth floor, completely empty, which he was willing to rent out. He knew that this was going to be our hiding place. We had to make living quarters out of this huge place, and with the help of Ernest's teacher from the trade school and some students who were handy and, most of all, trustworthy, an "efficiency" apartment was "constructed." As serious as the situation was, it had its humorous moments. It was not easy to find a bath tub, a gas heater, a stove, some furnishings and blackout curtains to cover the large windows. Ernest was very ingenious in designing and planning and loved it. We ended up with a very comfortable combination living-bedroom, kitchen-bathroom and a little hallway with a large closet. Only a few people knew of this address, not even Ernest's father. There was no telephone and we were constantly riding around on our bikes to keep in touch with the outside world. We had to pick up our mail from the people from whom we rented the room. The following winter was very severe, unusually cold, consequently, all the pipes which were outside were frozen and we had no water. We had to carry pails of water up four very steep flights of stairs - first from downstairs and then almost a block away. Another problem was how to keep warm. We had an iron stove but fuel was rationed. Luckily we could get coal through the aid of our landlord. We had mice, and one morning Ernest found a rat in a trap. It was awful, but we took it in stride and we slept in peace, at least for awhile.

At that time, Ernest's father's health failed and we were very concerned. He died in May 1942.

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In April 1942, things got real bad. We had to wear the yellow star of David (Judenstern). In the meantime, we also lost our German citizenship and we belonged nowhere. (I forgot to mention earlier, that Helen and Charlie got a vist to Cuba for us in 1940 which was of no use because the Germans refused to give us passports.) It is impossible to put into words what we went through. The Nazis demanded that all Jews submit a list of their assets and turn in all jewelry. Naturally, everybody tried to hide some things.

At that time, Ernest came into contact with a very rich man, a furrier from Leipzig, who took a liking to him, and one day offered to give us a connection who would be of help to get us to Switzerland if we ever needed or wanted to go. He mentioned that his entire family had just arrived there. The day came when we took advantage of this offer because on a Sunday, in early July of 1942, our landlord brought a notification from the Germans that we had to get ready in a week's time to return to Germany to a labor camp. During the next few days we found out that most German Jews, between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five, were called up, and after the war we heard that these people were deported to Auschwitz and very few returned. We were to report to Nazi headquarters in Amsterdam the following day for further instructions. Our landlord notified the Levinsohns about our summons and they came immediately. We were terribly disturbed and upset and the first thing to decide was whether or not to go to headquarters, and we did go. It was much clearer to me than to Ernest that under no circumstances should we return to Germany, especially since we were instructed to be at the railroad station in Amsterdam at midnight with a minimum of belongings such as - 1 fork, 1 spoon, 1 cup and 1 set of underwear.

One alternative was to actually go underground now, but Ali warned us that it would be extremely difficult to find a place in such short time. The alternative was to get in touch with the man who had offered the contact to get us into Switzerland.

It was fortunate that we had a week to organize our escape. There were many discussions and Ernest was still reluctant to leave. At that time, nobody

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realized that the next step from a labor camp was to a concentration camp. Max felt that we should not risk an escape and offered Ernest to work for the "Judenrat" as he did. This organization later on collaborated with the Nazis to organize the deportation of Jews. I was still strongly opposed to all this because I was almost sure that Ernest would be taken away. So we agreed that there was no other choice but to try to get to Switzerland. We had to pay a large sum of money for the "trip" from Amsterdam to Switzerland to the smuggler organization but were assured that no future payment would be required. We were advised by friends to take as much money as possible with us, so we proceeded to sell to our friends whatever we were able to, mainly food supplies such as butter, oil, canned goods, sugar and, also, cigarettes, all of which was impossible to buy, and we also sold some jewelry.

We left Amsterdam by train approximately July 10th after dark which was a violation of the law because Jews were not allowed in the station. Ali and two of her friends boarded the train to "Den Haag" with us, but the train left late and we would have arrived after curfew in Den Haag. Everybody had to go through a checkpoint to get a permit to be out in the street after curfew, which meant that we would have been caught right away. So we returned home which was very upsetting. One of Ali's friends went to Den Haag to notify the people who were expecting us, and the arrangements were changed to the following day. We then went in daytime and took a train to Bergen op Zoom. Ernest told me later on that never before or afterwards was he so scared. There were Dutch people and German soldiers on the train and we felt very conspicuous and we thought it best not to sit together. It was a great relief when we arrived in Bergan op Zoom. Somebody was waiting for us and took us to a real nice looking house. We were the last ones to get there; two young Dutch Jewish couples, one with a five year old boy, were already there. We spent the night in this house and were informed that we would be brought to Belgium very early the following morning. None of us slept. Repeat performance, the small overnight bags we had with us had to be left behind. It was a cool summer day and we put on layers over layers to have some clothing. I made Ernest wear a pair of pjamas under his suit, very much against his will. Our

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companions seemed to be nice people. The little boy, whom I will call Mark, was a darling child. He was told not to talk at all and he always remembered that. We followed a young man through a heavily wooded area and had to stop several times so that he could make sure everything was safe. I cannot remember how long we walked but it seemed a long time, especially with the frequent stops we had to make. Finally, we came to a highway. Our guide had a bicycle and he put Mark on it. The highway was already on Belgian territory, and after awhile we saw the first belgian patrol on bicycles. Although there was no doubt that we were refugees, they obviously looked the other way. We walked to Kappellen, and from there took a streetcar to Antwerp. The young man brought us to a small boarding house where we spent the rest of the day but he said if we felt safe enough we may go out, which we did. Ernest was in 'seventh heaven' because he felt the Belgians looked already different than the Dutch people, and it helped that he spoke French without an accent. We went to the leading department store, Bon Marche, and bought a small overnight bag for each of us so we could undress and put the layers away. In the evening we were supposed to take a train to Brussels but had to return to a small inn due to the same curfew trouble we experienced in Amsterdam. Another unexpected obstacle and added upheaval.

We made it to Brussels the following day and from there went by train to Paris. There was always a guide with us on the same train but we split up into two or three groups. Our luck was that any check by authorities was impossible because the trains were so overcrowded. (I must emphasize again that we were without any legal papers.) All passengers had to leave the train at the Belgian/French border, but fortunately the Germans were not looking for identification papers, only for smuggled goods. By then, the entire territory was occupied by Germans.

At our arrival in Paris, we found our guide who handed us over to a Frenchman. We were still the original group, six adults and Mark. We rode on the overcrowded Metro to a low income section of Paris and went to a very simple boarding house. The people there were extremely nice and understanding. We did not have to worry about meals or anything, all was arranged by the Underground, but we

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were informed that there would be a few days delay because other groups of Jewish refugees were ahead of us. Although it was a big disappointment, there was nothing we could do. Next day, Mark's mother became ill. She was not able to get up and had severe breathing problems. It got so bad in the afternoon that we had to ask the owner of the boarding house if it was safe to get a doctor for her. After a while he came and told us that she was critically ill, and a few hours later she died. This was one of the most tragic moments of our journey. The husband went completely to pieces and we felt we had lost a friend. Apart from that, the consequences for all of us were terrible. The innkeeper had to call a doctor and the police to get a death certificate. At that point, Ernest took over completely because he was the only one who spoke French fluently. We realized that we could not remain at the inn because we would be caught. The innkeeper had a friend, a policeman, whom she knew had connections with the Underground and who might be able to be of help to us. She contacted him immediately and luckily he came very soon. He also agreed that we had to leave the house as quickly as possible. It was most difficult to convince the husband to come with us together with Mark. We left some money behind so that the woman could be buried and the innkeeper promised to take care of everything. She kept her word, because the husband found the grave when he returned after the war.

In the meantime, it was late in the evening and we left in a hurry. The policeman went with us back to Paris by Metro and took us to one of the better hotels at La Place L'Etoile. He promised to send somebody who could help us and left. Now the real misery started. We had no food coupons and I remember that we exchanged one pack of cigarettes, which was worth a fortune, for a loaf of bread and a glass of milk for Mark. Another sleepless night, full of anxiety for all of us, followed.

Next morning, a well dressed man came to the hotel and Ernest discussed our next steps with him. (You must understand that by now we were completely separated from the chain we were to follow and were totally on our own.) The man made a good impression but asked for a large sum of money and promised to take us across the demarcation line. Fortunately, there was enough money between the three families. The agreement was to meet him at the railroad station where he was

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to get the tickets for all of us, and then would get half of the amount he had asked for. He told us that he would be on the same train but would not travel with us and to meet him outside the station in Vierzon. Should this not work, we were then to go to a small camera store close to the station in Vierzon for further instructions. We saw him boarding the as usual overcrowded train in Paris. There were a few stops between Paris and Vierzon. (I want to explain that Vierzon is a small town where, at the time, France was divided into occupied and unoccupied territory.) The train ride was uneventful. When the train pulled into the station at Vierzon I thought I was going to die because I saw hundreds of German soldiers standing around all over the station. We had no choice but to leave the train, walk through the mass of soldiers who took no notice of us. We then looked for our guide who was nowhere to be seen. We waited around and then one of the men went back into the station to look for him but he was not there either. He must have gotten off the train somewhere on the way. We then looked for the camera store and could not find it. By now it was getting dark and we had no idea where to go. We were frantic because we were certain that we would be detected at any moment and taken away to God knows where. Suddenly Ernest had the brilliant idea to go to the Catholic church. He felt if they cannot help, at least they will not denounce us. We all agreed that this was the best thing to do.

We found the church and next to it the parsonage where we rang the bell and a young curate opened the door. We asked for the priest, who was not in. Ernest told the young man that we needed a roof over our heads for the night. He checked his watch and told us that we had exactly five minutes before curfew. He rushed us down the street, pushed us into a small inn and left because he was not supposed to be out after curfew either. Curfew hours were different in each town. One never knew the exact time and close to the demarcation line it was earlier than in other places. The woman in the inn was very friendly and completely unsuspecting because she advised us to go to the German headquarters to get a permit to occupy three rooms. Inspite of all the tension, we had to laugh at her ignorance. Ernest explained the circumstances to her and we just had to hope for the best and trust her. It was our luck that the Germans were despised wherever we came and people were willing to help. There was a restaurant in the inn facing the street

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and separated by a sliding wall was a large room with long tables and chairs, no other furnishings. She told us that we could spend the night in that room and brought an old car seat for Mark to sleep on. It was a relief to know that we had a place for the night, not knowing what the next day would bring. As it turned out, we spent a couple of days and nights in that room. The innkeepers were very helpful and understanding and let us come to the restaurant after the German soldiers left, which was really ironical. Food was rationed but there was always something for us to eat. They refused to take money but we insisted on putting a generous amount in the piggy bank for the children. The big problem was how to go on from there.

After the first night, Ernest asked the woman if she knew anybody who could bring us across the border into unoccupied France, and she said there was not a chance. A little later she returned and said she remembered a young man who used to smuggle goods. After approximately two hours, a young fellow appeared looking like a smuggler in "Carmen." He said that he would be willing to assist us in tackling this very dangerous undertaking. He mentioned that the actual border between the two zones is a shallow river. He looked our group over and told us that somebody would have to carry Mark across on their back. This made us suspicious as to the depth of the river but we had to take the chance. Again we were asked for a lot of money. He explained that the most favorable time for crossing would be on Sunday after lunch because this was the changing of the guards and there were fewer patrols on Sundays. This conversation took place on Saturday and meant spending another night in our "luxurious" quarters.

On Sunday we got our usual lunch which consisted of tripe. Our Dutch friends did not want to eat it but Ernest and I insisted that they must finish everything on their plates. Nobody felt much like eating. We packed our few belongings and left with the young fellow. It was July 19th, Ernest's birthday. The little town looked deserted, it was very cool for a summer day and overcast. After we left Vierzon we came to a canal with a path on one side and bushes on the opposite bank. After we had walked for about half an hour we suddenly saw German soldiers coming towards us. Our guide told us to continue walking and he disappeared with his bike into the bushes. Our hearts sank. The young German

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soldiers came towards us talking to each other in a very distinct Nuernberger German. What a small world! Ernest and I carried on a very animated conversation in French and our Dutch friends kept saying, "Mais oui, mais non" over and over. The soldiers passed without even looking at us. Apparently they were glad to be off duty. Our guide appeared again and after about half an hour we came to a wooded incline where he stopped. He told us that from now on we would be on our own, asked for his money, showed us the river and repeated that once we had crossed the river we would be in unoccupied France. I asked him if we should remove our shoes since we had only one pair, but he only said to hurry, looked left and right and told us that there was no patrol and to get going. We could not believe what we saw. The shallow river was torrent and looked very muddy from all the rain. However, there was no time to think. Our friend put Mark on his shoulders; we held our overnight bags over our heads and waded into the river. Being the shortest, I was in the water up to my neck. The other girl slipped and almost lost her balance. We made it to the riverbank and had to climb up a very steep hill where we reached a little country road alongside the river. We stopped for a moment to catch our breath and I remember giving Ernest a kiss and saying that our arrival in unoccupied Franch was his birthday present. We thought that from now on we were more or less "free" people. We were wet and covered with mud but the strong wind helped to dry our clothes. It was a miracle that nobody got sick. We were glad to make it that far. After another short walk, we got to a little town and immediately looked for the railroad station because we wanted to take a train to the next city. Of course, Ernest had already studied maps and timetables. We found out that a train was going to Chateauroux in a little while and we boarded that train. After a few minutes a gendarme opened the door of our compartment and asked for our identification papers. We all had a Dutch identification card with a picture and a large "J" (Jew) on it, which we handed over. He looked at the cards from all sides and told us to get our luggage and get off the train. This was a horrible blow. He was very rude and told us that he would have to send us back since we had no valid papers. I told him that he could shoot us right then and there but that none of us would return to the occupied zone. Ernest explained in French that we were looking for the nearest Dutch Consulate. There were arguments back and forth, but he finally relented when he realized that we were Dutch and not Germans.

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He then took us to the police station in the village, and this being Sunday, there was only one man on duty. Both went into another room, obviously trying to decide what to do with us. They told us we could stay overnight in a small hotel and to report back first thing in the morning. Once we got to the hotel, we washed up because we had not been out of our clothes for days and were covered with mud from the river. The place was very primitive but we did the best we could. Now the problem was to get something to eat.

In the meantime it was evening and we were very hungry. Ernest and I went downstairs to investigate. There was a small diningroom and it turned out that the police had given instructions to the owner to feed us. This was a very unexpected and welcome surprise.

Next morning, we all went to the police station. By then it was decided what to do with us and we were told that we were not free and had to take a train to a very small village close by where we were to remain under police supervision until further notice. We were told to see the mayor of the village who would assign living quarters to us and give us food coupons. Before they sent us off we got a package of cigarettes from the policemen, and since we were all smokers, this was a present from heaven.

Nobody accompanied us to Charot, obviously they trusted us. The mayor was friendly, gave us our ration cards and took us to a farm house. Everything looked a little brighter, at least for the moment. It was a real nice summer day. We saw that there was a pump and buckets of water, and my girlfriend and I immediately washed everybody's clothes. There also was a long clothesline and everything dried very quickly in the sun. We felt more like human beings again. The rooms were small but clean and the farmers turned out to be extremely helpful. They told us immediately that their son was a prisoner of war in Bavaria, and were delighted to find out that Ernest and I came from there. We had to eat our meals across the street in a very rundown place, some kind of a bistro. There was little food and we were constantly hungry. After each meal the five of us shared one cigarette. Mark was such a good little boy and never caused any trouble, and we took care of him the best we could.

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We had only guilders in large denominations and that presented another problem. There was no bank in Charot and Ernest asked for permission from the mayor to travel to the next town in order to exchange some money for smaller cash. The farmer loaned him a bike and he was able to accomplish his mission.

Now we started discussing what to do next and called different friends and relatives in Switzerland, and my uncle, Emil Kahn, in Perpignan, in southern France. We hoped that somebody would be able to help us in some way. My uncle, his wife and daughter lived in Perpignan which was unoccupied France near the Spanish border, as refugees. After a few phone calls, he suggested that Ernest and I should come to Perpignan and stay with them. As we were ready to leave, we got a telegram from him telling us to stay put, that he would come and get us. We could not understand his reasoning at that time and he explained later that he did not want us to travel alone because sometimes people were taken off trains, put into prisons and never heard from again.

My uncle arrived the following day and after many years of separation, it was a tearful but happy reunion. It was not easy to part with our Dutch friends. We had become very close sharing all these horrible experiences. After the war, we found out that they all had survived. The young couple stayed in France, and Mark and his father made it to Switzerland. My uncle and we travelled all night again in a packed train and arrived in Perpignan the following morning. Although he and his family lived in a small apartment, there was no question but that we should stay with them.

Finally things looked more hopeful. Everything was rationed but through my uncle's connections, we could buy a few summer clothes. I still remember what we bought and they were designer clothes to us. We had clean beds, good food and were happy to be with the family, but in the back of our minds was always the question, what to do about our future. Spain was very close but out of the question because they sent refugees back to where they came from. France was not safe either, so the only solution was Switzerland. A friend of my uncle had relatives in Annecy, France, near Geneva, Switzerland. During the three

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weeks we stayed in Perpignan, my uncle got busy obtaining identification cards for us and other necessary papers, so that we could travel to Annecy. This was by no means easy. This all took place in August 1942. My uncle's friend gave us a letter to his relatives in Annecy asking them to help us. We contacted these people as soon as we arrived in Annecy. They were well-to-do and very helpful during the four weeks we spent there. They were German Jews and understood our predicament. He was very well informed about what was going on between the Germans and the French. Annecy is a resort town on a lake, very pretty and quaint. They recommended a small hotel at the lake, a little further away from town. We rented a small room, including meals, and acted like tourists. A very pretty public beach was nearby, and since it was warm and beautiful, we spent most of our days there. We felt rather safe because we did not look different from anybody else. The meals were very meager but sometimes our acquaintances invited us or gave us some food. They also loaned Ernest a bike so he was able to go back and forth at a certain time every afternoon and pick up local grapes from a store. This was very important because it was part of our diet.

Rumors got around that the Swiss border was closed and nobody could get in any longer. We simply had to sit tight and it was again a terrible situation.

At the end of August they started rounding up Jews in Annecy and one evening our acquaintances told Ernest that they heard that a razzia was planned for that night. They gave Ernest the address of their milkman who was with the Resistance and willing to hide us. I was already in bed with curlers in my hair when Ernest came back to the hotel and told me that we had to leave immediately because we were in great danger. Once more we left everything behind, except our tooth brushes, and Ernest bicycled to the milkman's, with me sitting on the handlebar.

We stayed there for a couple of days until our acquaintances came and told us that the immediate danger was over. We returned to the hotel, feeling very uneasy, but had no other choice. We found out that the Swiss Government had a change of mind, evidently under pressure from their people, and that there might again be a chance for some refugees to get in. Our friends knew that the

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French Resistance helped Jews to get into Switzerland. They did not ask for money, but we gave anyway to help their cause.

We returned to the milkman, where we spent another night and left the following morning by train from Annecy via Annemasse to a small fishing village near Thonon on the shores of Lake Geneva. Again it was a trip filled with fear and anxiety because Annemasse was known for people being taken off trains by police and taken away. While the train was in the station at Annemasse we noticed a couple who looked Jewish and seemed frightened and whispered to each other in Dutch. I believe they also noticed us. When we arrived in the village, we saw many Jews leaving the train. It turned out that they were all part of our group. The Frenchman approached us and told us to go into a restaurant at the lakefront where we got something to eat. The Dutch-speaking couple who were on the train came to our table and we sat together during the meal. A third couple, also Dutch, joined us. They were our age. After we had eaten, the Frenchman told us that a fisherman would try to get us across the lake to Switzerland late in the evening in a small fishing boat. The six of us sat on a bench and saw Switzerland, not knowing if we would ever be able to get there. At approximately 10:00 p.m. we were told to get into a fishing boat where two fishermen were waiting for us. They rowed away from the shore very quickly and told us not to talk at all. After a while, they put on an outboard motor which they kept turning off in order to listen for noises. When we approached the Swiss shore they went back to rowing. We had to get off the boat and wade through the water to dry ground.

The fishermen made us promise never to tell the Swiss authorities that we crossed the lake in order not to give away this route of escape. Here the six of us were standing on Swiss soil with wet feet. This must have been around midnight. Right away an argument started between Ernest and our companion, Ida, whether to turn left or right to get to a railroad station, because we wanted to get to Berne to the Dutch Embassy. Of course, Ernest had an insert of a map and he was determined to turn right, and Ida insisted on going to the left. In later years we laughed about this incident whenever we got together. Ernest won the argument and we made our way through the woods and began to see houses left and right. Quite a few dogs started to bark and we became frightened.

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We found our way to a railroad stop with a shelter and benches. Ernest knew there was a night train leaving for Berne. We talked and laughed and were overjoyed to be in Switzerland. Shortly afterwards somebody, who evidently heard us, came with a flashlight to look at us. He turned out to be a Swiss policeman who wanted to know what we were doing there and we told him we were waiting for the train to Berne. He asked for our papers, which we did not have, and he asked us to follow him to the next police station, where the six of us were locked up in one cell for the night. This was no longer a laughing matter because we were afraid to be sent back. They let us out early next morning and told us that we would be interned for the time being. Of course, we did not know exactly what that meant. Then we were taken to a restaurant near the depot where we got coffee and delicious Swiss rolls. This was certainly a surprise after having spent the night in a cell. He boarded a train with us, and it was then that we found out that the men and women would be separated. We were terribly dismayed. After a short ride, the men were told to leave the train. A policeman waited for them. Since I was the one who spoke French most fluently, I asked him where they were to be taken. He told us that they would have to go to a camp which turned out to be a former girls' boarding school in Busigny. At the same time, we found out that we were going to Lausanne to the Salvation Army, where the women were kept. We said goodbye to our husbands and were very upset that we had to go on by ourselves. For a while we thought we had made it and suddenly there were problems again. It was a terrible let-down.

Ida, Bep and I arrived in Lausanne with our escort and went to the Salvation Army in town. I had been in a boarding school in Lausanne as a young girl, knew the city well and my feelings were indescribable. The Salvation Army major and his wife were decent and treated us well. We had to do housework and help in the kitchen. More and more refugees arrived daily. After a few days they let us go for little walks alone. Food was still plentiful in Switzerland at that time and we were looking at it in front of bakeries and food stores and had no money to buy anything. One evening, the major took us, as a treat, to Ouchy at the lake to show us the beautiful scenery. In the course of the conversation, he inquired what our husbands' occupations were, and when I told him that Ernest exported hops he was quite taken aback because the Salvation Army people are 'teatotalers'. I did not know about that and it was a somewhat awkward situation.

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This was September 1942, shortly before the Jewish holidays. The Jewish community in Lausanne had decided to do something for us and the women of what we call Sisterhood, invited us to an afternoon tea. They served generously and each of us got a little basket with chocolate, cheese and crackers to take home. The ladies were very gracious and showed real interest in us. Somebody mentioned the name Dreyfuss which rang a bell with me. My roommate in the boarding school in Lausanne had a distant relative by that name in whose house I was invited in 1927. I got up my courage and told Mme. Dreyfuss who I was and, to my surprise, she remembered me. There was lots to talk about and I found out that the former owner of the boarding school, Mme. Lilienfeld, was still living in Lausanne, and that her son, whom I knew as a little boy, had become a successful lawyer. Mme. Dreyfuss told me that her husband was president of the Jewish community in Lausanne, and would be glad to be of help to us if necessary. It was a great relief to know that there was somebody who had known me in former years and I considered this a lucky break.

We knew that our husbands were close to Lausanne but had no contact with them. In the meantime, countless refugees arrived from all over. The Swiss were not prepared for that and the authorities did not know what to do with us. We heard that people with some money were allowed to live in boarding houses or furnished rooms. (I want to explain here that we were all under the jurisdiction of the Swiss Military and they decided what was to be done with us.) A general of the army in Lausanne came quite often to the Salvation Army. He was very humane, and after I stayed at the Salvation Army for one week, I approached him and asked him to let Ernest to come to Lausanne, at least for a day to straighten out our affairs. I informed him that Ernest had two sisters in America who would certainly help us by sending money. He smiled and called me a good manipulator - better than the Swiss Bank. The next day Ernest came. There was much to talk about, and among other things he told me that the two men who were with him, Hermann and Fred, were both of German origin and married to Ida and Bep, both Dutch girls. When they arrived in camp the week before, a sergeant interrogated them and Ernest answered all the questions because he spoke French fluently. The Swiss were most anxious to find out how people got into the country and they put

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Ernest under pressure to tell them. Ernest refused and pointed out that he gave his word of honor not to talk, and, as military men, they must understand that. There were no further questions.

We cabled our family in the U.S.A., and this was the first time they heard from us in a long time. Ernest was able to arrange a monthly transfer of money, a limited amount, whatever the Swiss permitted. The Salvation Army had a list of people who were willing to give refugees room and board for little money. We were lucky to find the most charming old lady, American born and very well educated. She rented rooms mainly to students but was willing to rent us a room. We then contacted Mme. Lilienfeld who was delighted to see me and meet Ernest. She suggested that we get in touch with her son who, as I mentioned before, was a lawyer. He told us that Mr. Dreyfuss was overloaded with work to help the many refugees in Lausanne and thought it was a good idea for Ernest to offer his help on a voluntary basis. Mr. and Mrs. Dreyfuss were remarkable people and many refugees owe their lives to them. Mr. Dreyfuss was reluctant to use Ernest's help but decided to give it a try. This was the beginning of a very large organization for the aid to displaced persons called, "Schweizerische Juedische Fluechtlingshilfe." Ernest was very happy and worked voluntarily there until we left Switzerland in November 1945. He was extremely well liked because he was such a good listener and always willing to go out of his way to help. Now, after his death, I have received letters from some of his "proteges" who all felt they lost a good friend.

After we were together for about six weeks, I had to report to a refugee camp which turned out to be my former boarding school in a suburb of Lausanne. I was kept there and met many of my new friends, men and women. They were very strict there and guarded us day and night and we were not permitted to move about alone. Ernest was supposed to go there too, but Mr. Dreyfuss needed him so badly that he intervened and got permission for Ernest to remain in our room in Lausanne and go to the office. He "visited" me on weekends in camp.

When the commandant of the camp heard that I was in the boarding school there, he called me to his office one day. He inquired if I was the one who was

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in that school many years ago and when I told him this was so, he said, "What a magnificent view you had from here." I could have killed him.

Hermann and Bep were no longer with us. The Dutch Government had set up a special camp for their people near Montreaux and they were all taken care of. Ida was very ill and spent some months in a hospital in Lausanne. Fred was in camp for quite a while. Ida was then sent to Davos and later on Fred got permission to live with her there.

In December 1942, life changed again. I was sent to a work camp near Basel, which was run by the civilian adminstration. Ernest was allowed to stay in Lausanne to continue his work. I had met a girl, Liesel, at the Salvation Army in Lausanne, with whom I became very friendly. Both of us were taken to Liestal near Basel by a Swiss soldier. Our new "home" was an old, rundown hotel which had been closed for many years and before was only used for the summer. It was located on a hill overlooking the countryside, about half an hour walking distance from Liestal. The place was terrible, it was very cold and we really suffered. There was no heat and food rations were small. Sanitary conditions were beyond description and there were mice and lice. The only bright side was that we were a group of young women who stuck together. We had to do all the housework; elderly women had to knit and sew. Right after Christmas I had to chop wood for the kitchen stove and got a splinter in my right thumb. I got a very bad infection but was not allowed to see a doctor on my own. A young medical student from a nearby refugee camp for men treated me and made it worse. Early in January 1943, I developed a very dangerous case of blood-poisoning and finally was sent to a Swiss woman doctor in Liestal who was assigned to our camp. She made another incision and sent me back to camp. I became seriously ill that night and they called the doctor who saw me during the day. She instructed a young refugee girl, a pharmacist, to give me a morphine injection and to bring me to the office the following morning. I was half dead when they took me there by sled. The doctor did not even see me. Her maid handed my friends an admission slip for the hospital in Liestal. As sick as I was, the hospital was heaven at that point. I was operated on the same day and was lucky that I did not lose my arm. The camp notified Ernest and he got permission to visit me immediately, and he came

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the following day. They kept me in the hospital for three weeks, everybody was very nice. I got excellent food, sometimes double rations because the nurses felt so sorry for me. I had to go back to the woman doctor in Liestal to get permission for sick leave. She was outright nasty and I was convinced she was a Nazi. Reluctantly she gave me a permit for two weeks vacation in Lausanne, but with the help of Mr. Dreyfuss I was able to stay for six or eight weeks, and I recovered completely.

I was most unhappy when I had to return to camp, but late in the spring of 1943 things looked somewhat brighter. I became friendly with the director of the camp, a young Swiss girl, who helped me to be transferred to a work camp near Lausanne. My friend, Liesel, came with me and a better life started for us. Liesel's husband worked with Ernest in the same office. Conditions in Moudon were better than in Bienenberg. In general, the population was more understanding in the western part of Switzerland and more helpful to us. I met a number of wonderful people in camp with whom I am still friendly, among them Dr. Richard Baer and his wife Grete. They also came to New York later on and he died there.

In October 1943, Liesel and I got permission to live with our husbands. Ernest and I moved back to the furnished room with kitchen facilities where we stayed before. We still had to report to the police once a week and were not allowed to travel about, but life seemed more normal. By then everything was rationed in Switzerland but nobody went really hungry.

In June 1944, I got the sad news that my mother had passed away in England in May 1944. It was a terrible shock and I was heartbroken. Up to this day, I still see her standing in front of the boarding house in London in August 1939 when we said goodbye. She looked so sad and forlorn. Naturally, I was terribly worried about my father until I found out that a good friend of theirs, Else Schloss, took care of him. She came to this country, together with my father, and she still is a very close friend of mine.

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I did some volunteer work at the "Fluechtlingshilfe" and we both kept very busy. We moved once more to a modern apartment with heating facilities, together with some Dutch friends. This was Fall of 1944. It was a big improvement because we got hot water for a few hours every two weeks which we could use for bathing and cleaning.

We stayed in Switzerland until 1945, when the Dutch government allowed us to return to Holland. There was a special train for all Dutch people from Basel to Amsterdam. We spent a few days with some friends in Den Haag and then proceeded to Amsterdam. We moved in with Lutz and Ali who were living in my father-in-law's old apartment until we found a furnished place of our own. Conditions in Holland were horrible. This once so rich country was robbed by the Germans of everything.

Before we left Switzerland, Ali had cabled not to forget to bring sewing needles, tooth brushes and scrub brushes. We brought all of it and many, many more items which were not to be had in Holland, not even for lots of money. We brought some second-hand bikes with us which we did not leave out of sight at any time. I was almost embarrassed to walk around in a good winter coat and decent Swiss shoes. A great many of our friends had perished and it was all very sad and depressing. Food was very scarce but we received food packages from our relatives in America and this was of tremendous help. My father sent us cigarettes from England which were in great demand, and one could exchange a few cigarettes for just about anything. We collected some of our belongings which we had left behind. Ali was very apologetic that she had had to trade some linens and other household goods for food from the farmers since there was absolutely nothing to eat during the war.

Ernest was the only survivor of the five partners. His father died in 1942 in Amsterdam; his uncle, Willie Tuchmann, died in Westerborg, a concentration camp in Holland; Karl Lauinger, his wife and three children perished in Theresienstadt, and Max Lauinger in Bergen-Belsen. Dora survived and also returned to Holland. Lutz's mother survived underground with Ali's help, and later went to her daughter in Montevideo. Willie Tuchmann's wife survived too.

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My uncle, Emil, Steffi and Gerty, fortunately survived. He served as a soldier in the Free French Army, and Steffi and Gerty lived in Barcelona for a few years. After the war they moved to Paris and we gave an affidavit for my young cousin, Gerty. She came to America in 1948 and lived with us for a while.

All in all it was a sad return to Holland for us. Ernest tried to revive his business connections. We got passports for Aliens from the Dutch, and Ernest could go to England and meet some of his former business friends. He also started proceedings for a British Visting Visa for me which was very difficult to obtain so that I could visit my father. I got the Visa in March 1946 and flew to London - my first flight. I met Ernest and we both went to Nottingham to my father. Happy as we were to see each other again, it was a sad reunion. During that visit we decided to immigrate to the U.S.A. The misery in Europe was just too much, and after all we had been through we wanted to begin a new life in a safe country where we would belong again and become citizens. We could have stayed in Holland as well as England if we wanted to.

We found out that a very good friend of Ernest's, Louis Barrow, who was English, had kept our British permits that we got in 1938, and due to that we were able to apply for U.S.A. visas in London. We knew that the quota went faster in England than in Holland. My British Visiting Visa was extended twice and I stayed six months in England, traveling back and forth between Nottingham and London to get all our necessary papers. Ernest also spent some time in England but had to go back to Holland frequently to attend to his business. After six months I was asked to leave England. At that time, my passport was at the American Consulate and I almost landed in jail, but the British authorities realized that I could not possibly leave without a passport but insisted that I leave as soon as I got it back.

We returned to Amsterdam on Yom Kippur 1946 and stayed there until we left for America. It was very hard to get passage on a boat because there were so few. Somebody in London was able to book us from Goeteborg (Sweden) to New York on the old S.S. Gripsholm. We had a cabin in the very lowest deck

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but it did not bother us as long as we knew that we were getting out of Europe, and going to the United States. We arrived in New York on my birthday, December 2, 1946, and this was the third happiest day in my life. Needless to say that Ernest was also overjoyed. My father arrived in the States six months later and lived with us until he died in 1963.

In the years to follow, we kept up the friendships with many of our fellow-refugees, and on our frequent trips to Europe we always managed to see some of them. In 1969, Ernest and I arranged a reunion and gave a beautiful dinner party at the Amsterdam Hilton. They came from all over and it was a memorable occasion. We made several pilgrimages back to the places we had passed on our journeys, even traveled to Vierzon and were amazed that the River Cher, which had been so formidable at the time, had very little water. It was a hot summer. We also tried to find the spot on Lake Geneva where the fishermen let us off the boat, but the area is so built up that we could not locate it. What we did find was the little railroad station where we were picked up by the police. We also went to the hotel in Annecy, which was still owned by the same family. They remembered the events of 1942.

This is our story, perhaps sometimes rather sketchy, but I tried to put everything down as best as I remember, and believe me, I missed Ernest's help very much.

I was asked many times if I would have the courage to try the escape from Nuernberg to Holland again, and I always reply that I would, but not alone because this was the most horrifying experience for me of this part of our escape.

The entire escape took a lot of courage and optimism, and many times we were certain our luck would run out. We would not have succeeded without the help and goodwill of our many friends and the aid of many, many well meaning, decent people.